

Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health
*Opposition to the Elimination of the Annual Transfer from the Master Tobacco Settlement
to the Connecticut Tobacco and Health Trust Fund*

Appropriations Committee Hearing

To the Distinguished Chairman
March 6, 2015

Despite gains in reducing the prevalence of tobacco use, smoking remains a leading cause of premature illness and death in Connecticut. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 70% of adult smokers would like to quit. Tobacco use rates are disproportionately high among certain populations, including individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, substance abusers, and criminal offenders. At the local level, these populations are hard to reach. Investments that support organizations and agencies who work directly with these populations and can offer direct and ongoing cessation and relapse prevention services are critical to reducing the smoking rates among these populations. A zero fund balance in the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund would end most tobacco prevention and control activities, initiatives and programs in Connecticut. CADH therefore opposes the elimination of the \$12 Million annual transfer from the Master Tobacco Settlement to the Connecticut Tobacco and Health Trust Fund (THTF).

CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Connecticut's 74 local health departments and districts. Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and are critical providers of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration.